

I Get to Love You by [luxuriousvoyage11](#)

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Summary:

The story of Mike and Eleven's proposal and wedding.

I Get to Love You

Author's Note:

Inspired by "I Get to Love You" by Ruelle

This concept might've been a little too ambitious for me but I couldn't get the song/idea out of my head so hopefully, you enjoy it despite my reservations :)

One look at you, my whole life falls in line

I prayed for you before I called you mine

Oh, I can't believe it's true sometimes

Oh, I can't believe it's true

If there's one year Mike will never forget, it's 1983. His young self had expected the normalcy he'd grown so used to in his small hometown: go to middle school, play D&D with his friends, and enjoy the highly anticipated summer break. What he got, however, was one of the best and worst weeks of his life.

When Will first went missing, it's as if nothing else mattered; the party was incomplete and they just had to find their friend, no matter what forces were trying to stop them - but then Mike found Eleven and he didn't know what it was about the girl, he just knew she was gonna be special to him. The boy didn't even need to think twice about giving the quivering girl his jacket or giving her a warm place to stay.

Despite her barely speaking, they had formed a bond. He was able to understand her nonverbal cues and she was able to listen and understand his problems. The lingering looks and closeness might've escaped the two, but Lucas and Dustin knew what was going on right away.

"Hi, El! El, El, El! I love you so much..."

And as dramatic and foolish as he felt at just 12-years-old, that

statement really appeared to be true when Mike watched her vanish from the classroom. The summer he so looked forward to just left him depressed and longing for El. They could've shown her the local pool they were at every sunny day or took her to the beach to see the ocean, but no, she was gone and, really, so was Mike.

He had been moody and mopey and seemed to have completely lost his role as a leader; until crisis came to Hawkins yet again and eventually reunited the two. After that, he knew nothing could ever be that bad because the worst had already happened. They had been separated for almost a year, he with no indication if she was even alive or not. He told her he couldn't lose her again and that still stands true eight years later.

El had been observing her boyfriend's face for the past five minutes, watching it go from sadness to anger to that dopey smile she loved so much.

"What are you thinking about?" she eventually asked, a hint of a smile on her face. He's brought out of his thoughts, both happy and painful when he hears her voice and turns to meet her gaze.

"What?" he asked, still in a daze.

"What were you thinking about?" she repeats, "you looked...intense." He let out a short laugh, pulling his girlfriend across the couch and on to his lap.

"Just how we got here," he mumbles against the side of her shoulder.

They had moved out of Hawkins with the rest of the gang after senior year, all of them renting a three-bedroom apartment in downtown Chicago.

"I believe we drove," she says playfully, her eyebrows wiggling up. Mike lets out another snort, shaking his head at her corniness.

"You're more like Hopper every day," he says, "I think you'll be threatening to beat me up soon."

A smile lights up her face and he feels his heart tug in his chest. Sassy, 12-year-old Lucas was right: he loves her so much.

He places a soft kiss on her temple, amazed that this beautiful, kind, strong girl actually loves him back. She snuggles further into his side, sighing against him contently before closing her eyes and its within those few, peaceful seconds that Mike realizes he can't wait any longer.

I get to love you

It's the best thing that I'll ever do

I get to love you

It's a promise I'm making to you

"Mike, calm the fuck down!" Dustin shouts at his friend a week later whose lanky leg is bobbing up and down vigorously, "she's obviously gonna say yes!"

It had been a party effort to hide the highly awaited proposal. It was Max's job to get El out of the house, dreading the fact she had to be out for a few hours shopping and running errands.

"You better not pussy out," she whispered to Mike harshly before walking out the door with El.

Will was cooking the penne alla vodka and setting the table, flowers and a single candle in the middle while Dustin and Lucas were there for (a lousy attempt at) moral support.

"Seriously," Lucas agreed, "we thought for sure this shit would've been done by graduation."

"I'm glad you classify Mike's undying love and marriage proposal to my sister as 'this shit'," Will says from the stove, gesturing finger quotes when he repeats Lucas's phrase.

"Exactly!" Mike says, grateful for his only supportive friend, "I should've known you two would be no help!"

"We just don't see what you need help with," Dustin points out, "you love her, she loves you, you've probably already said all kinds of sappy shit to her and, above all, she'll definitely say yes! So, pardon

us for not giving in to your irrational anxiety."

While Dustin was ranting, Lucas had picked up the black ring box from the now neat coffee table and opened it up to examine the engagement ring inside. He had to give credit to Mike, between his budget and determination to keep it a secret, he had picked a nice ring - a small, 1-carat diamond perfect for El's dainty finger.

His friend could've proposed with a Ring Pop and El would've been crying out her acceptance but they all saw how hard Mike worked to make the extra money. His three friends even decided to split his share of the rent this month since they knew he was looking into engagement rings.

"When are they coming home?" asked Will, "this should be done in 15 minutes.

"I told Max 6:30," Mike says, noting the current time was six, "so probably soon."

The boys work to clean the rest of the apartment and set the table before Lucas and Dustin go into the latter boy's room where the Nintendo games were hoarded. Mike sat on the couch, his leg beginning to bounce up and down again. His palms are sweaty and the tiny black box in his pocket feels like it weighs 20 pounds.

"Shit shit shit," he mutters, "I can't believe I'm doing this, Will."

The small boy just raises an eyebrow at his flustered friend, a smile crossing his lips. "It's just another one of your promises, Mike," he says, "you're promising to love and cherish and take care of her...just in a super official way that will entail a ceremony and after party."

Mike lets out a small chuckle, feeling assured by his friend's words. "You're awesome, Will," he says genuinely, "and the best brother-in-law a guy could have."

Will gives him a soft smile before throwing a thumbs up and going down the narrow hallway to his shared room. Mike lets out a heavy nervous sigh, waiting to make the only girl he ever loved his wife.

Whatever may come, your heart I will choose

Forever I'm yours, forever I do

I get to love you, I get to love you

He hears a rattle in the front door's keyhole and El's laugh rings through the entrance of the apartment, Max impersonating their not-so-friendly neighbors. The brunette quickly takes notice of the set dinner table, pink roses in the middle and her lanky, blushing boyfriend sitting a few feet away on the couch.

"Aw, Michael, you shouldn't have!"

The boy just rolls his eyes at the redhead, standing up and making his way over to El. "Have fun?"

She nods, her bottom teeth in her lip as she tries to contain her smile. "We did," she says, still eyeing the romantic table, "what is this?"

"What, can I not plan a date night in and cook for my girlfriend?"

"Not for long," Max mumbles as she passes Mike, low enough so she's sure El won't hear.

His eyes go wide and he turns to her now retreating back as she walks into the room where the muffled shouts of the boys can be heard.

El looks at the heaping pile of pasta and knows Will definitely prepared this, but is grateful nonetheless. "Thank you," she says sweetly, standing up on her tippy toes and placing a soft kiss on his cheek.

He puts his hands on her waist and turns her to face the chair, pulling it out for her and bowing dramatically. Her giggle rings through the air and it calms Mike considerably, feeling his slightly tense body immediately relax.

They sit and eat and laugh and Mike eventually confesses that Will did indeed make the dinner. El's look of mock surprise causes the boy to burst out into laughter, throwing a leftover piece of pasta at her. It lands on the floor three feet away from her and she gives him a knowing look, giggling at his awful aim.

She starts to pick up the emptied cups and plates before Mike halts her, placing his hand on her arm and squeezing it softly. "I'll do that," he insists, "maybe change into pajamas and we can watch Full House?"

Her eyes light up at the suggestion and she pecks him on the lips quickly before running into her room to put on comfortable clothes.

He rinses off the dishes thoroughly, swearing to wash them tomorrow morning before hearing El slip out of their bedroom and on to the couch. Her long, curly hair is up in a bun, one of his old t-shirts swallowing her so her tan legs are exposed.

He admires her from afar, watching her eyebrow crinkle when she realizes the remote is missing and then watching her face relax and lift upwards when she sees it on top of the tv.

"You cleaned too!" she says, finally noting the cleared off coffee table, "now I know you're up to something," she teases her notoriously messy boyfriend.

A few moments of silence passes and she turns her head to the kitchen to see Mike just standing there, watching her admiringly but his body slightly stiff.

"Are you okay?" she asks, getting ready to stand up and walk over.

He takes four long strides over to the couch before abruptly kneeling down and placing a hand on her knee.

Her eyebrows furl together until she sees his hand move into his pocket and her eyes widen. He opens up the small black box to reveal the beautiful, sparkly ring and El promptly bursts into tears.

"I didn't really prepare a speech because, you know, I figured it would come to me and now I ironically don't know what to say," he pauses to wipe a tear from her cheek, letting his finger linger on her smooth skin, "I'm pretty sure I fell in love with you the first week we met and I never would've imagined you'd feel the same way," he begins, "I don't think anyone could be good enough for you because you're just so damn amazing, El, and I still don't know what you see in me but I

swear I'll do everything I can to make sure you have the best life ever and...oh god, I think I did this wrong," he rambles once he realizes the box is already opened to reveal the ring, "I probably should've said the speech and then opened the box and asked you but-"

El's tears of happiness have turned to tears from laughter and she all but tackles her lanky, bumbling boyfriend in the tightest hug she's ever given anyone.

His arms are wrapped around her middle awkwardly, the hand with the ring outstretched so he doesn't drop and lose it and he's trying so hard to focus on not letting that tiny box slip out of his grip that he almost doesn't hear her say, "so, are you gonna ask me or not?"

A look of determination crosses the boy's face and he gives her the most beautiful smile she's ever seen.

"I've loved you since I was twelve and I know I'll love you for the rest of my life, no matter what," he adds for good measure before asking, "will you marry me, El?"

"Yes!" she yelps excitedly, peppering his flushed freckled face with kisses. "I love you, I love you, I love you," she repeats.

Mike and El are both on the floor, the shiny engagement ring on her finger when they turn to see their four teary-eyes friends peaking around the corner.

"That was the stupidest fucking proposal I've ever heard and you two still managed to make us cry!"

The way you love, it changes who I am

I am undone and I thank God once again

I can't believe it's true, sometimes

I can't believe it's true

An hour before the wedding, El is sitting in her old bedroom of the Byers-Hopper residence flipping through a photo album she had found under her bed. Her senior year of high school, Will had made

her a scrapbook for her birthday with every picture him or Jonathan had taken all throughout middle and high school.

She loved this scrapbook for many reasons, the amazing memories it held inside and sentimental meaning of it from her brother but mostly because you really saw her growth throughout the years. The first few years, in every picture, El's wearing a tiny smile and almost always next to Mike.

By the page that marks 1987, there was always a smile spread across her face or candid laughing photos with her and the party. One of El's favorite photos, however, is from Thanksgiving of that year. Max had lost a bet with her and the punishment was wearing poofy, flowery dresses to Joyce's annual Thanksgiving feast.

The girls are clinging to one another, Max laughing despite the knee-length purple dress she was forced to wear while El wears one of her bright smiles that lights up her eyes. In the background of the photo, you see a sweater-wearing Mike Wheeler staring lovingly towards their direction. You can trace the soft gaze to the back of the brunettes head and it made her heart flutter when she saw the "heart eyes" her friends constantly teased him for.

He was always there for her, guiding and protecting and helping her while she grew up and learned to live her life like an actual human in a loving home with friends and family.

She feels herself wipe a stray tear right before there's a knock on the door, her burly father peaking his head through. His eyes grow wide when he sees she's crying and he hurriedly rushes in and closes the door.

"You okay, kid?" he asks plopping down on her bed.

"Yeah," she quickly reassures with a short laugh, "these pictures just make me so emotional."

Hop peers over till his eyes land on the page and he smiles, remembering that Thanksgiving night. El flips the page and it reveals Hopper on his knee, almost taller than the woman covering her mouth while she stares wide-eyed at the ring.

"I really thought she was gonna pass out," El giggles, remembering how truly shocked Joyce was.

"Me too," he chuckles.

The two sit in a comfortable silence as she flips through the remaining photos and lands on the page she almost forgot was in here.

Will had informed Mike of the scrapbook idea and the boy had requested to do one page, decorating it with photos of the two and a tiny written message along the bottom.

Happy Birthday El, I love you more than you'll ever know.

Hopper lets out a laugh at the melodramatic message from a 16-year-old Mike Wheeler. "I think I'm supposed to ask you if you're sure you wanna do this or if he's really the one but...."

El pushes her father lightly with a giggle, closing the scrapbook and turning to the man.

"I just can't believe I'm getting married to him, dad."

And he doesn't know if its because of how beautiful she looks in her white gown or that she called him dad or if it really finally just hit him that he's walking her down the aisle but his eyes brim with tears and then the two are holding one another, happy tears streaming down both of their faces.

They stay like that for a few minutes before cleaning off their wet cheeks and taking a deep breath, needing to compose themselves.

"We need to stop crying before Joyce comes in here and starts sobbing again."

El lets out a quiet giggle, walking over to her dresser mirror and checking her appearance one more time. Her brown eyes are decorated with a golden natural shade of eyeshadow and mascara along with a small amount of blush, courtesy of Nancy. She smiles at herself before looking at Hopper through the mirror, "I'm ready."

I get to love you

It's the best thing that I'll ever do

I get to love you

It's a promise I'm making to you

The second the music started, Mike felt his eyes burn.

He had been prepping himself since Friday afternoon after El had all but been ripped away from him by his sister. "You'll see her tomorrow, loverboy! It's bad luck!"

The girl had just rolled her eyes but went willingly, blowing a kiss and sly smile towards her sulking fiancée before leaving the Wheeler household.

He and the guys had a quiet night in the basement like old times, going through Mike's D&D notebook and watching the movies they had grown up with.

"No shit, Mike, this was so good for your ripe age of 12," Dustin says flipping through the worn brown journal, "a shadow grows on the wall behind you, swallowing you in darkness..." he reads dramatically.

Mike lets out a snort, pushing his friend to the side, "shut up!"

"I can't believe the nerd who wrote that is the first one of us getting married," Lucas jokes.

"I know, right! Do you guys think he's gonna cry when he sees El tomorrow?"

"There's nothing wrong with that, Dustin!" Will defends.

And Will is surely glad he said that watching, from his spot as best man, the groom's eyes water up at just the sound of the music. He shares a knowing look with the two other groomsmen only to find them tearing up as well. The boy bites his lip to hide his laughter before turning around, a smile brightening his face when he sees El

come into view before the aisle.

Her brown hair is up in soft curls, a few stray pieces hanging down her pretty face. Her long-sleeved white dress is lacy and delicately drags back as she and Hopper slowly approach the altar.

Her smile is bright and her brown eyes stay straight ahead, never leaving Mike's who meets hers just as happily. Hopper breaks the connection, shaking Mike's clammy hand while giving an affirming nod before kissing El's cheek and taking his seat in the front row next to Joyce.

"Hi," El mumbles under her breath, reaching out to wipe a stray tear from his face.

"Hi," he responds, breath shaky and eyes roaming over his bride.

"We are gathered here today..."

Whatever may come, your heart I will choose

Forever I'm yours, forever I do

I get to love you

The vows between Mike and El couldn't have been more authentic and true to their personalities.

"...the couple has a few words to share," the priest says, a pointed look towards Mike. The nervous groom takes a deep breath before locking eyes with El and, as if her gaze gives him the courage to do so, he begins.

"I...I can't promise that there won't be dark times and I can't promise our future will be rainbows and sunshine or that life will be easy but I can promise, El, my love and devotion and respect for a lifetime. I can promise that I'll always be here for you and make sure you always feel loved and happy. I can promise that in those dark times, we'll get through it together. I can promise that I'm yours, forever."

El's eyes brim with tears and she can't even hold herself back from placing a kiss on his wet cheek, her hand caressing his face before

pulling back and smiling. The overwhelmed priest's gaze turns to El, signaling for her vows.

"I swear we didn't write these together," the smiling girl mumbles causing everyone to chuckle.

She breathes deeply in before uttering, "I still can't find the words to describe what you mean to me or how I feel about you but there only seemed to be one thing I kept coming back to. So, Mike, short for Michael," she says, humor in her tone, "I promise that I'm yours, forever."

His eyes go wide and a goofy smile breaks out onto his face before his hands on her cheeks and they're kissing like their parents aren't crying, friends aren't cheering, and the priest isn't uttering the words, "I now pronounce you husband and wife."

They say love is a journey, I promise that I'll never leave

And when it's too heavy to carry, remember this moment with me

I get to love you

The wedding reception was a small hall filled with their closest friends and family, Will's best man speech slurred with Dustin and Lucas jumping in and sharing stories of a 'heart-eyed Wheeler' before he was in his teens.

Hopper and a barefoot El danced with tears in their eyes and Jonathan had gone around documenting every moment.

The couple being celebrated finally had mingled with all of the guests and cut their cake, now finally alone on the dance floor with El's head resting on Mike's chest. While they were swaying, they see fiery red hair dart past them towards the DJ, aka Officer Callahan, and send a wink their way.

They share a knowing look and the current song fades out only to bring in The Police's Every Breath You Take. El giggles against Mike's white shirt, shaking her head at Max's request, "I knew one of them would do that."

And within that moment, Jonathan snaps the photo of the two lovingly staring at each other. Mike's hand is in El's hair, the curls unruly after she ripped out her up-do two hours into the party. His eyes are soft and El's smile is bright and every guest is positive this couple will never fall out of love.

And for the most part, they don't. This picture stays with them on their bedside table in the apartment to the gallery wall in the home they buy at age 24. Mike looks at it a short year later while cradling both of their twins in his arms at 3 a.m. and El admires it while Mike's away on a weekend business trip. It's a reminder of their love and most important promise.

"Promise?"

"It means something that you can't break, ever."